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->From the Editor's Keyboard
"~~~~~"

"Saying it like it is!"

I'll apologize early, because I have no idea when this week's issue will be released. It may be sitting in your mailbox or available online hours before our normal "on the newsstand" time, or some time Saturday morning. The reason for this is that I'm now working evenings, and an occasional Friday evening scheduled work night has developed. Can't be helped folks, but we'll do what we can to stay as close to schedule as possible. And I think you'll understand the facts of reality these days that a paycheck is more valuable than receiving a free mag every Friday night around 8:00 pm! Anyway, thanks for understanding!

It's been a horrible past couple of weeks, personally speaking. As I mentioned in last week's issue, or "oldest 'son" Butkus has been ailing as of late. We took him to an animal hospital earlier this week and had an ultrasound and biopsy performed. We got the biopsy results back on Thursday, and he has lung cancer. That was devastating news to us, but we knew that was a possibility. Next week, we're scheduled to take him in for an additional consultation and try to find out what our options might be. So, it's been a stressful couple of weeks, and my wife and I are doing what we can to make sure that one of us is always around to be with him. He's doing okay under the circumstances, but he's noticeably very weak and obviously very ill. So, I hope you'll understand that my mind is on other things much more important to me at the moment.

Until next time...

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PEOPLE ARE TALKING
compiled by Joe Mirando
joe@atarinews.org

Hidi ho friends and neighbors. Another week has come and gone, and another handful of messages magically appeared in the NewsGroup... a whopping 18 messages in seven days... Heck, I can remember when 18 messages an HOUR was a slow day... but that was years ago.

So... what's new in the world? Well the 'big three' American auto makers

are standing on the steps of the House of Representatives with their hands out... looking for a paltry 40 or 50 BILLION dollars in bail-out money... at least they drove to the meeting this time instead of each flying in their own company jet.

Don't get me wrong, I'm not against jets or perks for executives, but when you're asking for billions of dollars to save a company that's dying because you couldn't or didn't want to see the way out, you'd best not do it in Armani and Leer.

So this time at least one of them drove his company's hybrid vehicle... does it look any better to show up in a brand new 40 thousand dollar car? Not to me it doesn't.

You want to impress me? Show up in a Men's Warehouse suit or dockers and a button-down, driving a 1998 Cavalier. NOW you're talkin' like you're one of us. 'Till then, thank your lucky stars that we're not tarring and feathering your fat, bonus-taking butt and running you out of the country on top of a SmartCar.

The cost to each and every person in this country is going to be enormous, to say the least, but it's got to be done. Can you envision what this country would be like without auto manufacture?

And no, it's not the unions that are killing things... at least not all by themselves, it's multi-million dollar bonuses, it's poor investment of talent, manpower, resources, it's outsourcing, deferred debt and 'tricky' accounting practices, and it's the 'stock is our product' mentality... the idea that cars and trucks are just ways to pump up stock prices so you can get new shareholders who'll pay more money per share so you can build more overpriced vehicles to pump up stock prices more so that you can get new shareholders who... well, you get the idea.

Anyway, we may have to save the industry, but we don't have to save the management that allowed this mess to overtake them. Boot their asses out and get a couple of bean-counters in there and round out the boards with 'real' people... you know... people who work for a living. Get some of the people who shower AFTER work as opposed to those who shower BEFORE work... and let 'em get to work. There's not an auto worker in the country who wouldn't jump at the chance to build a better car... a smarter, more efficient, more 'green' car... Is there anyone who wouldn't rather be PROUD of what they've build, what they're a part of, what they helped their company, their community and their country accomplish? Well, yeah, to be fair there are a few, but for the most part we all want to be proud of what we do. We all want to be a part of something good and helpful. And yes, we want to participate in the rewards as well as the work. The United Auto Workers' union is doing things I never thought I'd see them do to help the corporations, and I applaud the union for it... but there's more to do. They need to concentrate on fairness in the workplace and forget about silly things like getting to work five minutes early in order to leave ten minutes early or some of the other silly things I've heard of lately... A fair days pay for a fair day's work. That's what it used to be about, and that's what it's going to have to be about again... and nothing else.

Oh, and one other thing... every executive should have to spend one full day every month "on the line" with manufacturing employees. Each month in a different department until the exec knows what every line in every department does. He/she doesn't have to know it inside-out, just know that it's vital to the product, and therefore, the company.

Well, that's enough of that. Let's get to the news, hints, tips and info available this week from the UseNet.

From the comp.sys.atari.st NewsGroup
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I've lost the full context of our first topic, but I gather that someone was asking about the CTB2 handled different clock speeds. 'RedSpecter' posts this on the subject:

"The CTB2 is not "aware" of whether the 32mhz clock is connected to anything or not. The absence of this clock will only effect VIDEL modes that enable the external video clock input. The default TOS resolutions do not use the external clock, but you'll need it if you want the higher resolutions/bit depth the VIDEL is capable of.

If you use a screenblaster or equivalent device you can feed the VIDEL an external clock via the video port of the falcon and achieve higher resolutions even though the CT2B clock is not connected."

Francois Le Coat posts this list of sites he cannot find:

"The following WEB sites are missing

<<http://www.atari-source.org/>> Your SOURCE for Atari 16/32
<<http://www.atari42.de/voja/>> Volkens Atari Welt: Main (EasyGEM ...)
<<http://www.atari42.de/weets/>> Holger Weets Software (RscView ...)
<<http://www.ppest.org/atari/imgrun.php>> Image runner
<<http://www.spythis.com/cca/>> Crawly Crypt Archives
<<http://www.stud.uni-karlsruhe.de/~uk48/TOSBook/>> Documentation
<<http://www.rottengatter.de/index-e.html>> Peter Rottengatter (Sting)
<<http://www.atari42.de/>> atari42.de (Volker Janzen)
<<http://ragnars-world.homelinux.org/atari/>> Ragnars World of Atari
<<http://www.ppest.org/atari/>> P. Putnik's Atari pages

May we have news from their maintainers?"

PPera replies:

"[<<http://www.ppest.org/atari/>>] is moved to:
<http://ppera.07x.net/atari/> or/and
<http://ppera.exofire.net/atari/> "

Mark Duckworth adds:

"I run atari-source.org and it loads for me. It's not loading for you? I know it hasn't had updates for some time. [frown]"

Last week, Jo Even Skarstein wrote about the difference between the NOVA and NOVA Plus cards:

"I believe the difference is in the ISA card. A friend of mine had a Nova Falcon with a 4Mb ATI Mach 64 with VRAM, I had one with a 1Mb ATI

Mach 64 with RAM. The former was (IIRC) a Nova Plus."

Guillaume Tello now surmises:

"Okay, so changing the card itself can improve the whole thing."

Jo Even tells Guillaume:

"Yes. Good luck in finding an ISA Mach 64 with VRAM though ;-) I found one on eBay a while ago, with a starting price of \$199!"

Mark Duckworth adds:

"May not be 100% true IIRC. I have a super nova that was originally a Nova TT. It wasn't originally mine and the original owner had to get replacement GAL's from the manufacturer for the VME card to complete the upgrade."

Jo Even brings up a good point:

"There are probably differences between the TT and Falcon versions. I'm only familiar with the Falcon version, and the same interface works with both RAM and VRAM versions of the ISA card."

Frank Szymanski adds:

"But only with 2MB. I have a spare 4MB isa card and it does not work with NOVA falcon."

Jo Even tells Frank:

"That's weird. I'm pretty sure that my friends Mach64 is a 4Mb card."

Phantommm adds:

"If my sources are correct, The Nova Falcon was sold with either 1MB or 2MB at the start. It was really expensive, and the cost between a 1MB or 2MB Nova was a lot.

There seems to be a few different models of the Nova card, such as the SuperNova. Memory and graphics power determine the name of the graphics card.

The info I have is, The SUPERNOVA 64 was a 2 or 4 meg VRAM and the NOVA PLUS 64 was 1 or 2 meg DRAM.

Also, there seems to be a Mach 32 version, 1 or 2 meg D/VRAM.

There were versions for the Falcon, MSTE/TT. It also came in the "EAGLE" at one time so say some. The Nova could also be used in a Mega ST using a Mega Bus adapter.

Take-Two: Industry Sales Good So Far

Black Friday sales for the video games industry were probably better than expected, but that's no guarantee of strong sales for the rest of the holiday season, Take Two Interactive Software Inc Chief Executive Strauss Zelnick said on Thursday.

"I think everyone was encouraged by Black Friday," Zelnick told the Reuters Media Summit in New York, referring to the day after the U.S. Thanksgiving holiday that marks the start of the holiday shopping season.

"It was better than expectations, but it's pretty hard these days - being slightly down is the new up," said Zelnick, a veteran of the U.S. media industry. He has been at the helm of Take Two, the New York-based video game publisher best known for its blockbuster 'Grand Theft Auto' game, since March 2007.

Healthy sales on Black Friday are no indicator that the industry will be able to sustain the sales momentum through December, Zelnick said.

Strong game titles will continue to sell well, but "everyone's at best cautiously optimistic," Zelnick said. "You're unlikely to be celebrating, but you'll be OK. In terms of how our titles are performing, I feel that it's within that range."

Earlier this week, Microsoft Corp's vice president of strategy and business development for interactive entertainment business, Shane Kim, told the summit that Black Friday weekend sales of its Xbox 360 video game consoles broke a record, up 25 percent from a year ago. Kim also said he remains "cautiously optimistic" about holiday season sales.

Zelnick did not disclose sales figures for "GTA 4," which has sold more than 10 million units as of August, since launching in April.

This month brings to a close a year in which Take-Two, whose other hits include "Bioshock" and the 2K Sports series, was closely pursued by much larger rival Electronic Arts.

Zelnick reiterated that its strong titles make it secure enough to go it alone, even in an environment where consolidation may affect weaker companies.

"We are well financed and well structured (and) we own our intellectual property," he said. "I feel really good about how we are positioned to be an independent company."

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DHS Needs Fresh Ideas on Cybersecurity

The Department of Homeland Security is too reactionary to cybersecurity threats, policy experts said Wednesday, and needs to develop stronger incentives for the private sector to take preventative measures against cyberthreats.

The DHS cybersecurity initiative has come under heavy criticism, and some have suggested responsibility for cybersecurity be shifted to the White House. Panelists at a roundtable discussion Wednesday hosted by the House of Representative's Homeland Security Committee agreed there could be stronger leadership, but they emphasized that there are potentially more effective means of improving the nation's response to cyberthreats.

"I personally don't believe you can designate some person and say, 'You're responsible for securing the nation's computers,'" said Marc Rotenberg, executive director of the Electronic Privacy Information Center. "At the ground level, we're going to have the right system of incentives."

Those incentives could be legislative, he said, such as encryption requirements for electronic health records.

Regardless of how the government encourages network managers to protect their systems, it will be critical for the private and public sector to work together, panelists said.

"We're going to need encouragement so that there are incentives in place to invest the money necessary to make sure your machines are up to date, patched, and firewalled," said Fred Cate, director of the Center for Applied Cybersecurity Research at Indiana University. "Increasingly we need to worry about security as something we can convince others to engage in."

If the private sector and private citizens are expected to cooperate with the government's cybersecurity efforts, it needs to trust them, panelists added. That requires more accountability and clearer missions for programs like "Einstein 2," the department's new intrusion detection system.

"The key point to understand is when we're looking at government surveillance, we need to know the reason for it," Rotenberg said. "If it's purely for security purposes, we would say that's OK, but it has to be solely for that purpose with a means of accountability."

The country also needs to take a more forward-looking approach to cybersecurity, the panelists said. Privacy implications should be considered from the very start of the development of security technologies, said Carol DiBattiste, senior vice president of privacy, security, compliance and government affairs for LexisNexis Group. Then, the government can develop policies around the technologies.

A more forward-looking approach should also include some creative thinking, Rotenberg said, such as devising ways to verify a person's identity without revealing their personal information.

"There ought to be more thinking of a strategic vision not just for the (Homeland Security Department) as a whole, but for each of its initiatives," Cate said. "What are the 10 top cybersecurity threats? Let's deal with those. The impetus to do something should not be stronger than the impetus to do something intelligent or thought through."

Spam Volumes Rising Despite McColo Shutdown

Spam is on the rise again, just in time for the holiday shopping season. Spam dropped two-thirds in November after Silicon Valley-based McColo, a major spam network, was shut down. At the time, Symantec correctly predicted little long-term effect on spam levels.

"Symantec cautions users to continue to be on guard against spam and malicious code attacks as attackers have traditionally tried to leverage festive session and topical global events to lure users into opening and responding to their messages," said Vincent Weafer, senior director of the Symantec Antivirus Research Center.

Symantec warned that control systems would be reestablished and the McColo shutdown would drive spammers toward peer-to-peer botnets, which are more resilient. It also warned that the end of the year sees a large increase in spam volume, often driven by holiday spending. The profit motive encourages spammers to find a way to get their messages to victims.

Indeed, while the McColo shutdown was a significant blow to spammers, volumes will probably continue to rise in time for Christmas, according to Graham Cluley, a senior security consultant at Sophos.

"The spammers guys are back in business with their unwanted e-mail campaigns," Cluley said. "The spam levels may not have yet returned to their pre-McColo-shutdown heights, but the bad guys have been working hard ramping up their infrastructures in readiness for their Christmas campaigns."

Now, Srizbi, one of the largest botnets on the Internet, has new life. Asprox, Mega-D and Rustock are also up and running again. This time, spammers are looking to Internet service providers hosted outside U.S. borders, making them more difficult to shut down. For example, security firm FireEye is reporting at least 50,000 Srizbi machines are hosted on Estonian-based servers.

"The hackers who run the botnets will change the infrastructure of their botnets, adopting a more distributed model to mitigate the damage done by the McColo shutdown," Cluley said. "Several smaller botnets were already following this model. However, because the big (old-fashioned) botnets were still working, there was no need for them to change their methods. The closing of McColo has forced changes."

Cluley recently blogged about how spammers are beginning to put more emphasis behind spams promoting luxury goods like brand-name watches and handbags - although typically these are cheap faked goods - as the Christmas holiday approaches.

"The credit crunch will make people be keener than ever to bag a present at a bargain price," Cluley said, "but purchasing goods sold via spam is

only going to perpetuate the problem of junk e-mail."

Patch Tuesday Will Have Eight Bulletins

The final Patch Tuesday for 2008 will be big, with six critical bulletins and two important bulletins due, according to Microsoft.

On Thursday, the company announced eight security bulletins set to go public December 9. The pre-announcement is intended as a heads-up for IT departments before Patch Tuesday. Six bulletins are considered "critical," the most serious ranking given by the software giant. Two are considered "important," the next level down.

Among the critical patches, two affect Windows, and there is one each that addresses issues in Word, Excel, Visual Basic, and Internet Explorer. All flaws could enable remote code execution if exploited.

Of the "important" bulletins, one is for SharePoint, and the other is for Windows Media Center.

Apple Pulls 'Old' Antivirus Software Warning

The latest commercial for Apple's I'm a Mac, I'm a PC campaign against Microsoft has been tarnished. Just days after Apple posted an article telling Mac users to run antivirus software on Mac OS X, the company pulled the article, saying it was old.

"We have removed the knowledge base article because it was old and inaccurate," said Monica Sarkar, an Apple spokesperson. "Mac is designed with built-in technologies to provide protection against malicious software and security threats right out of the box. Since no system can be 100 percent immune from every threat, running antivirus software may offer additional protection."

Apple had posted the article on its support site, encouraging Mac owners to run antivirus software only to turn around, pull it, and say it was a mistake.

Apple in the article had encouraged the widespread use of multiple antivirus utilities so that virus programmers will have more than one application to battle, making virus coding more challenging. In the article, Apple also suggested running three applications -- Intego VirusBarrier X5, McAfee VirusScan for Mac, and Symantec Norton Antivirus 11 for Macintosh.

Apple's article drew a lot of attention, especially since the company's latest television commercial included a person representing a PC sneezing and saying it has caught the latest virus. The person representing the Mac hands a tissue to the sniffing PC before it crashes.

Now it's Apple that might need the tissue after dealing with its own errors and after officials said no operating system is completely safe from all threats.

In fact, Apple's Web site tells consumers that no computer using the Internet is 100 percent immune to viruses and spyware. It goes on to say that the Mac is built on a solid UNIX foundation and designed with security in mind. It also says its Safari Web browser alerts Mac users whenever an application is downloaded.

Reports from security company F-Secure show that 100 or so viruses were written for the Mac OS this year, and 850,000 for Microsoft Windows. But F-Secure also found two Trojan viruses that had a great impact on Mac users, including the PokerStealer Trojan and the AppleScript Trojan Horse Template.

The Trojan Horse affected Mac OS X 10.4 and 10.5 and was distributed from a hacker Web site, according to MacSecure. A discussion on the hacker site focused on distributing the virus through the iChat and Limewire applications. The virus ran hidden on a Mac system and allowed the hacker complete remote access, sent user and system passwords, and avoided detection by opening ports in the firewall.

Apple Yanks Macintosh Anti-virus Software Advice

Apple has replaced advice that people install anti-virus software on Macintosh computers with assurances that the machines are safe "out of the box."

The move prompted online speculation as to whether Apple was merely polishing the Macintosh image or that the increasingly popular computers are as impervious to hackers as the California company maintains.

Apple routinely touts how rarely Macintosh computers are afflicted with malicious software as compared to machines based on Microsoft Windows operating systems, which run more than 90 percent of the computers in the world.

On Tuesday Apple removed a 2007 Knowledge Base posting telling people to install "multiple anti-virus utilities" in Macintosh computers to thwart ill-willed software savants with arrays of defenses.

"We removed the Knowledge Base article because it was old and inaccurate," Apple spokeswoman Monica Sarkar said Wednesday.

"The Mac is designed with built-in technologies that provide protections against malicious software and security threats right out of the box."

Some software specialists believe that Macintosh computers have been spared attacks mostly because hackers see more return in targeting Windows-based machines that make up the bulk of the market.

Macintosh sales have rocketed with the popularity of Apple's iPhones and iPods, but the rising profile of the computers has also made them more appealing to hackers.

Software security firms consistently urge people to protect computers with anti-virus software kept up-to-date no matter the operating systems used.

"Since no system can be 100 percent immune for every threat, running

anti-virus software may offer additional protection," Sarkar said.

Destructive Koobface Virus Turns Up on Facebook

Facebook's 120 million users are being targeted by a virus dubbed "Koobface" that uses the social network's messaging system to infect PCs, then tries to gather sensitive information such as credit card numbers.

It is the latest attack by hackers increasingly looking to prey on users of social networking sites.

"A few other viruses have tried to use Facebook in similar ways to propagate themselves," Facebook spokesman Barry Schnitt said in an e-mail. He said a "very small percentage of users" had been affected by these viruses.

"It is on the rise, relative to other threats like e-mails," said Craig Schmugar, a researcher with McAfee Inc.

Koobface spreads by sending notes to friends of someone whose PC has been infected. The messages, with subject headers like, "You look just awesome in this new movie," direct recipients to a website where they are asked to download what it claims is an update of Adobe Systems Inc's Flash player.

If they download the software, users end up with an infected computer, which then takes users to contaminated sites when they try to use search engines from Google, Yahoo, MSN and Live.com, according to McAfee.

McAfee warned in a blog entry on Wednesday that its researchers had discovered that Koobface was making the rounds on Facebook.

Facebook requires senders of messages within the network to be members and hides user data from people who do not have accounts, said Chris Boyd, a researcher with FaceTime Security Labs. Because of that, users tend to be far less suspicious of messages they receive in the network.

"People tend to let their guard down. They think you've got to log in with an account, so there is no way that worms and other viruses could infect them," Boyd said.

Social network MySpace, owned by News Corp, was hit by a version of Koobface in August and used security technology to eradicate it, according to a company spokeswoman. The virus has not cropped up since then, she said.

Privately held Facebook has told members to delete contaminated e-mails and has posted directions at <http://www.facebook.com/security> on how to clean infected computers.

Richard Larmer, chief executive of RLM Public Relations in New York, said he threw out his PC after it became infected by Koobface, which downloaded malicious software onto his PC. It was really bad. It destroyed my computer," he said.

McAfee has not yet identified the perpetrators behind Koobface, who are

improving the malicious software behind the virus in a bid to outsmart security at Facebook and MySpace.

"The people behind it are updating it, refining it, adding new functionalities," said McAfee's Schmugar.

Malware is Getting Smarter, CA Warns

Online attacks will be dominated by smarter malware and bots targeting Web users ranging from gamers and social network users to the elderly and unsuspecting parents.

This is according to IT management software company CA, maker of the CA Internet Security Suite, which was recently updated to the Plus 2009 version.

"Families should feel safe and secure when they are online," said Brian Grayek, vice president of product management for CA. "However, there are more online threats than ever before. While it's important for parents to practise general PC safety practices like not placing a PC in a child's room and monitoring social networking profiles, parental control software provides an added layer of protection and additional peace of mind."

"Each element of the suite, which includes a personal firewall, anti-virus, anti-spyware, anti-spam and anti-phishing software has been enhanced to provide even stronger protection against a wide range of emerging online threats," said the software company.

The software is in a single console and is easy to use and install, allowing users to monitor the security status of all of the licensed PCs on their home networks, said CA. Other features of the suite include integrated parental controls that help protect children from inappropriate Web content and enable parents to monitor Internet activity. Also, the suite helps users back up and restore their important data and PC settings or transfer them to a new PC.

Grayek continued: "Historically, high-performance users, like gamers, turn off security features because it either slows down their PCs or they get pop-ups that interfere with their experience. This is a huge risk to their PC security. We've focused on developing a product that runs quietly in the background for uninterrupted gaming and movie watching, while keeping the PC secure."

CA Internet Security Suite Plus 2009 is currently available from CA for US\$79.99 (MSRP), with a one-year subscription for up to five PCs in the household. More information is available at <http://shop.ca.com/>.

Adobe Admits New PDF Password Protection Is Weaker

Adobe made a critical change to the algorithm used to password-protect PDF documents in Acrobat 9, making it much easier to recover a password and raising concern over the safety of documents, according to Russian security firm Elcomsoft.

Elcomsoft specializes in making software that can recover the passwords for Adobe documents. The software is used by companies to open documents after employees have forgotten their passwords, and by law enforcement services in their investigations.

For its Reader 9 and Acrobat 9 products, Adobe implemented 256-bit AES (Advanced Encryption Standard) encryption, up from the 128-bit AES encryption used in previous Acrobat products.

The original 128-bit encryption is strong, and in some cases it would take years to test all possible keys to uncover a password, said Dmitry Sklyarov, information security analyst with Elcomsoft.

But Elcomsoft said the change in the underlying algorithm for Acrobat 9 makes cracking a weak password - especially a short one with only upper and lower case letters - up to 100 times faster than in Acrobat 8, Sklyarov said. Despite using 256-bit encryption, the change to the algorithm still undermines a document's security.

Adobe acknowledged the encryption algorithm change on its security blog. The company said brute-force attempts - where tens of millions of password combinations are tried in hopes of unlocking the document - could end up figuring out passwords more rapidly using fewer processor cycles.

The changes were made to increase performance, Adobe said. But Sklyarov said that even with the 128-bit encryption algorithm used in Acrobat 8, the application responds quickly to both correct and incorrect password entries.

"There is no rational reason why they did that," Sklyarov said.

Despite the change, there is a way to keep documents secure: When setting a password, people should use a combination of upper and lower case letters and other special characters, such as quotations marks, Sklyarov said. If special characters are used, the password should be no less than eight characters. If only letters are used, it should be at least 10 to 12 characters, he said.

Adobe imparted the same advice. "With a longer phrase and more diversity of characters, there are many more permutations to guess," according to the blog. The company also recommended that the security of documents can also be enhanced by additional access controls such as smart cards and biometric tools.

Europe To Get Cybercrime Alert System

Europe is getting a cybercrime alert system as part of a European Union drive to fight online criminals.

According to plans, European law enforcement body Europol will receive 300,000 euros (\$386,430) to build an alert system that pools reports of cybercrime, such as online identification and financial theft, from across the 27 member states.

Police will launch more remote searches of suspects' hard drives over

the Internet, as well as cyberpatrols to spot and track illegal activity, under the strategy adopted by the European Union's council of ministers Thursday.

The strategy, a blueprint for fighting cybercrime in the EU over the next five years, also introduces measures to encourage businesses and police to share information on investigations and cybercrime trends.

"The strategy encourages the much-needed operational cooperation and information exchange between the member states," said Jacques Barrot, vice president of the European Commission. "If the strategy is to make the fight against cybercrime more efficient, all stakeholders have to be fully committed to its implementation. We are ready to support them, also financially, in their efforts."

Plans for the EU alert system follow the recent establishments of the Police Central E-crime Unit and National Fraud Strategic Authority, which aim to fight cybercrime in the United Kingdom.

Icahn Says Opposes Partial Sale of Yahoo

Billionaire Carl Icahn opposes selling part of Yahoo to former AOL Chief Executive Jonathan Miller or anyone else because it is undervalued, he told CNBC on Wednesday.

"I don't think there is very much to having a partial bid for the company, at least as a large shareholder," Icahn said.

Miller, according to a report by the Wall Street Journal, is trying to raise money to buy all or part of the company. That has not been confirmed and the New York Post says he is actually trying to raise money for other purposes.

Icahn said he spoke to Miller over the weekend about the possibility of buying Yahoo.

"I think the stock is very undervalued," Icahn said.

He said the board would have to listen to any offer for a high price, but he is not enthusiastic about a sale.

"Right now I would be against that and I pretty much told Jonathan that," Icahn said.

He said he had not spoken to others on the Yahoo board, but thought they would agree.

Yahoo chief executive Jerry Yang has agreed to resign, under pressure, following the collapse of a possible acquisition by Microsoft Corp and poor performance.

Icahn said the company needs a new CEO who is "a hard-nosed, cost-cutting kind of guy."

He repeated his view that Yahoo needs to do a deal with Microsoft to share searching.

YouTube Clamps Down on Sexual Content

While the Internet promotes free thought, free speech and the ability for the world to express itself, companies are attempting to find a balance between welcoming free expression and censoring inappropriate content.

YouTube is trying to find that balance. The popular online video-sharing Web site has 280 million visitors monthly, with members posting 13 hours of video every minute. With the volume of videos posted, shared and viewed on the site, the company says it is cracking down on what kinds of videos are posted.

Specifically, YouTube is putting a tighter grip on content considered sexually suggestive. Videos with sexually suggestive - but not prohibited - content will be age-restricted and available only to users who are 18 or older, according to the company.

Company officials say they aren't asking for the respect reserved for nuns, but want users to not abuse the service.

Videos considered sexually suggestive will also be demoted on YouTube's Most Viewed and Top Favorite pages. In testing, YouTube found that, of the thousands of videos on those pages, several each day are automatically demoted for being too graphic. Those are the videos that get flagged by the community for being inappropriate.

YouTube, which is available in 19 regions, is being very clear about what kind of videos users can post, warning against pornographic videos even if the user is in the video. YouTube warns users that it works closely with law enforcement.

"We remain serious about enforcing these rules," a company blog posting read. "Remember, violations of these guidelines could result in removal of your video, and repeated violations will lead to termination of your account."

The crackdown does not end with porn. Users are also being told to avoid posting videos showing animal abuse, drug abuse, or bomb making. Dead bodies and gross videos are also prohibited.

Like other social sites, such as MySpace and Facebook, YouTube also requires that its community avoid stalking, harassment and threats.

YouTube has put its community in charge of finding video content that breaks the company's guidelines, including most nudity and videos of people being physically hurt, attacked or humiliated.

YouTube's online community has been encouraged to flag a video that violates the guidelines by clicking on a red flag below each posted video. Once selected, a drop-down window will open, listing different kinds of content that violate the guidelines, and the viewer must choose one of the violations. The video is then flagged, viewed by a member of the YouTube team, and acted on within an hour, according to the company.

"We encourage free speech and defend everyone's right to express unpopular points of view, but we don't permit speech that attacks and

demeans groups based on certain characteristics," YouTube said. "We draw the line on content that is intended to incite violence or encourage dangerous and illegal activity."

Content deemed restricted after staff review is viewable only by signed-in users who represent that they are 18 years of age and older and who have clicked through an interstitial page warning, according to the company.

"At YouTube, we are always looking for ways to improve user experience," said Victoria Grand, head of policy at YouTube. "Our decision to clarify what we consider sexually suggestive and to demote sexually suggestive content on certain browse pages is part of that effort."

"We believe that this change, along with the change in the way thumbnails are selected, will benefit users, partners and advertisers by making their YouTube experience more relevant," she added.

Opera Previews Next Version of Desktop Browser

Opera Software is giving developers and users an early look at its Opera 10 browser, which features a new version of its rendering engine that the company says offers 30 percent improvement in the speed of loading Web pages.

An alpha version of Opera 10 is available online. The rendering engine, called Opera Presto 2.2, is the foundation of all of Opera's browsers, including the popular Opera Mobile. It also runs on the server that powers the Opera Mini, Opera's thin-client browser that is used on cell phones.

Jan Standal, director of consumer product management and developer relations at Opera, said better loading speed and support for Web standards are the key design goals for Opera 10's release.

Standal noted that the alpha of Opera 10 released Thursday received a perfect 100 test score on the Acid3 test, which is the standard test from the Web Standards Project that gauges how well a browser follows generally accepted standards - such as Javascript, Document Object Model and Cascading Style Sheets - for Web pages. In the Acid3 test, a browser is expected to render a page a certain way.

Support for Web Font, a technology that allows a Web developer to specify any font that's available on the Internet rather than depend on ones available locally, also is available in the alpha release of Opera 10 as part of the Presto 2.2 software, Standal said.

Opera expects to release a beta of Opera 10 in early 2009 and a full version of the browser before midyear, he said.

While Opera's desktop browser has only a very small market share in the U.S., the software is more popular with users in Europe and Asia.

Acer Plans Netbook With 10.2-inch Screen

Acer, the world's third largest PC vendor, is planning to launch a netbook next year with a 10.2-inch screen, the largest netbook screen from Acer so far, a company representative confirmed.

The Taiwanese company's Aspire One netbook has been a hit this year. Launched at mid-year, the device now has Asustek Computer's popular Eee PC in its sights. Acer has forecast shipments of 6 million Aspire One's this year, against estimates of 5 million from Asustek for its Eee PCs.

The Aspire One out now has an 8.9-inch screen, but most companies are putting out netbooks with 10.2-inch screens now. The slightly larger screen sizes are more popular with people who like to view Web pages without scrolling left and right to see the entire page.

Asustek, which has offered a 7-inch screen on its Eee PCs, has said it does not plan to offer the small screen size in the future because people don't seem to like it as much.

Netbooks are mini-laptop PCs designed for mobility, typically sporting 7-inch to 10-inch screens and weighing less than 2 kilograms. Most netbook components, including the microprocessor, are less powerful than those of full-fledged laptops so batteries last longer. Netbooks are designed for dealing with e-mail, browsing the Internet and working on word processor or spreadsheet documents, not for heavy-duty gaming, video editing or other multimedia work.

Reports also indicate that Acer plans to launch a rival to Asustek's Eee Top, which is a low-cost competitor to Apple's iMac, a display with computing functions built-in.

Microsoft Targets Auctions in Counterfeit Crackdown

Microsoft continues to crack down on people it believes are counterfeiting and selling its software. On Thursday the company will add another 63 legal filings in 12 countries against individuals who it says are selling counterfeit Microsoft products.

The 63 actions are against people allegedly selling counterfeit versions of Microsoft Office, Windows XP and other products at online auction sites, said Matt Lundy, senior attorney with Microsoft's anti-piracy and anti-counterfeiting team.

Of the cases being filed, 16 are against defendants in the U.S., 12 each in Germany and France, and seven in the U.K. The other cases deal with activity originating in Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Japan, Mexico and New Zealand.

Auction sites are especially dangerous for consumers because they allow counterfeiters to reach anyone who browses the Internet, giving them a broad swathe of potential victims, Lundy said.

In one case Microsoft is working on, a defendant operating in New Zealand was able to ship counterfeit software from China to customers in the U.S., he said. "This demonstrates the global reach that the Internet and online auction spaces can provide pirates," Lundy said.

Sites at which the alleged activity occurred include Amazon.com, Craigslist, eBay, MySpace, PCWorld and PriceGrabber, to name just a few, according to Microsoft.

A popular scam Microsoft is targeting in this round of legal activity is a fictitious marketing scheme called the "Blue Edition." In these cases, counterfeiters say they are offering a special edition of Microsoft software, called the Blue Edition, that is available very cheaply because it was part of a manufacturer's surplus of the product, Lundy said.

"It's critical for customers to understand that Blue Edition is fictional," Lundy said. "It's merely an attempt by pirates to fool unsuspecting consumers into buying this product."

Microsoft identified the Blue Edition scam through complaints from customers that came directly to the company or were posted at online auction sites when people realized their merchandise was counterfeit, Lundy said. Most of the Blue Edition cases Microsoft is dealing with target customers in the U.S., he added.

Microsoft's continued legal activity to prevent the sale of counterfeit or pirated software is part of its Genuine Software Initiative, described at the company's Web site.

Microsoft also has a site called "How To Tell" that helps people determine whether the Microsoft software they were sold is genuine.

Shoppers Opened Their Wallets on Cyber Monday

Cyber Monday, the day after the Thanksgiving weekend in the U.S., lived up to its reputation for big online retail sales, triggering disproportionately high spending during this so far modest holiday shopping season.

U.S. shoppers spent 15 percent more than on last year's Cyber Monday, a boon to online retailers that are facing a muted holiday season with spending expected to be flat compared with 2007, comScore said Wednesday.

The surge in spending began on Thanksgiving Day - last Thursday - with a 6 percent increase over 2007, followed by a modest 1 percent increase the next day, Black Friday, and a robust 19 percent rise during Saturday and Sunday, comScore said.

The US\$846 million spent on Cyber Monday represents the second heaviest online spending day on record, comScore said. Overall, spending grew 13 percent between Black Friday and Cyber Monday.

Unfortunately, some large retailers may have been unable to fully capitalize on this spending boost because their Web sites buckled under heavy traffic. Some that faced significant problems at some point between Friday and Monday included Sears, Bloomingdale's, Victoria's Secret, Staples, Costco and J. Crew, according to various reports from industry observers, shoppers and Web site monitoring companies.

For example, between 6 a.m. and midnight U.S. Eastern Time on Black Friday, Sears' Web site had availability of 61.90 percent, meaning that out of every 100 shoppers, 38 were unable to complete a purchase,

according to Web site monitoring company Gomez. Sears acknowledged the problem.

Staples had availability of 83.64 percent on Friday and of 88.32 percent on Monday, Gomez said. However, a Staples spokesman downplayed the problem, saying via e-mail: "Our customers may have experienced a slight slow-down in page download times during our peak volumes over a two-hour period on Cyber Monday but we do not see any time where our customers were unable to complete their online purchase." Bloomingdale's, Victoria's Secret, Costco and J. Crew haven't responded to requests for comment.

Between Nov. 1 and Dec. 1 - the first 31 days of the holiday shopping season - U.S. residents spent \$12.03 billion in online retail sales, a drop of 2 percent compared with the corresponding period last year, according to comScore.

Big discounts and attractive promotions prompted U.S. shoppers to open their wallets, at a time when many of them are curbing spending due to the widespread economic woes that have affected their jobs, real estate values and retirement accounts.

Although U.S. shoppers spent 9 percent more in online retail purchases during the first 10 months of 2008, compared with the same period in 2007, comScore forecasts that spending during the holiday season - November and December - will be flat, matching the \$29.2 billion of 2007's holidays.

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